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ABSTRACT

The Maryland department of education provides guidelines for forming policies and procedures for selecting textbooks and instructional materials. Items to be included in the selection policy are listed, and 14 guidelines are provided for evaluating materials, with particular attention to procedures for handling requests for reconsideration of questioned materials. A separate brochure provides information on selecting and evaluating materials. A definition, factors to be considered in selecting the material, and evaluation criteria for materials are provided for both textbooks and media resources. A brief list of information sources and a sample request for reconsideration of materials are included. (LS)

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GUIDELINES for the Review and Selection of Textbooks and Instructional Materials

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Resolution No. 1976 - 18

Re: Review and Selection of Textbooks and Instructional Materials

WHEREAS, The selection of instructional materials should reflect the goals of education of each local educational agency; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That each local school system shall establish policies and procedures for reviewing and selecting print and nonprint materials to be used in the instructional program in accordance with guidelines established by the Maryland State Department of Education, and be it further

RESOLVED, That each local school system shall submit to the Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education, the policies and procedures established for the selection and evaluation of print and nonprint materials.

Introduction

The selection and adoption of textbooks and instructional materials is the responsibility of each local education agency in Maryland. Therefore, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education should have an officially approved and adopted policy for the selection of textbooks and instructional materials. Such a selection policy should include the following:

- ☐ The nature and scope of collections
- ☐ The governing body legally responsible for the operation of the review and selection program
- ☐ The specific role(s) of the person(s) responsible for the coordination of the selection of materials
- ☐ The objectives of the selection of materials
- ☐ The types of materials for consideration
- ☐ The criteria for the evaluation and selection of materials
- ☐ The selection sources for use as guides in the selection of materials
- ☐ The procedure for the selection of textbooks and instructional materials
- ☐ The procedure for handling gifts, loans, rentals, and free materials
- ☐ The procedure for handling challenged materials
- ☐ The process for the reevaluation of materials in existing collections

The official selection policy provides a procedure for consistent excellence in the choice of materials for use in the teaching-learning process. Also, it serves as a document that can be made available to parents and other citizens for furthering their understanding of the purpose and standards of the selection of textbooks and instructional materials.

When policy statements are cooperatively developed by administrators, teachers, subject specialists, students, parents, and representative citizens from the school community, and are accepted and followed, they provide both guidance and protection for all who are involved in the selection and utilization of materials.

Criteria for special subject areas, such as Family Life and Human Development, are delineated in the Public School Laws of Maryland. According to Bylaw 325.1, the Maryland State Department of Education has developed and distributed to all local school systems *Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials Which Will Insure Proper Recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities*. The Maryland State Department of Education has also developed procedures "for ensuring the elimination of sex stereotyping in print and nonprint materials" as directed by the resolution 1974-45. Procedures for the evaluation of career education materials may be found on pages 21-24 of the *Maryland Career Education Resource Notebook*.

All materials should be evaluated in accordance with standards and criteria established and accepted by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education and should be consistent with the following guidelines:

1. The process for the selection of textbooks and other instructional materials should involve the formal evaluation by and recommendation of administrators, teachers, subject specialists, and media personnel with input from students, parents, and community representatives.
2. Final authority for the acceptance and utilization of all instructional materials should remain with the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education.
3. Within each local school system, textbooks should be made available prior to initial purchase for review and examination by any interested person.
4. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education should establish procedures which enable parents to examine media center materials upon request.
5. The process of examining and evaluating materials should be continuous and systematic.
6. A file should be maintained containing evaluative statements of all materials that have been examined and reviewed. For materials not purchased, the reviews may be maintained for a shorter period of time than for the materials purchased.
7. All forms of print and nonprint materials should be included in the selection policy.

8. Specific criteria should be established for each type of material and/or subject area. The same criteria should be applied to gifts, loans, and other materials selected. The following criteria should be considered when evaluating and selecting textbooks; textbook content should:

- ☐ Be accurate and objective
- ☐ Represent the broad spectrum of viewpoints of given topics
- ☐ Be correlated to visual materials
- ☐ Contain bibliographies reflecting multi-media materials
- ☐ Be appropriate to levels of learning
- ☐ Be authoritative, realistic, factual
- ☐ Be arranged chronologically and/or systematically
- ☐ Reflect the pluralistic character and culture of the American people
- ☐ Be free of sexual stereotyping
- ☐ Represent various ethnic groups

The following criteria should be considered when evaluating and selecting media; curricula materials should:

- ☐ Be relevant to today's world
- ☐ Represent artistic, historic, and literary qualities
- ☐ Reflect problems, aspirations, attitudes, and ideals of a society
- ☐ Be pertinent to the curriculum
- ☐ Contribute to the objectives of the instructional program
- ☐ Be appropriate to the level of the user
- ☐ Represent differing viewpoints on controversial subjects
- ☐ Provide a stimulus to creativity

Technical materials should:

- ☐ Be of acceptable technical quality: clear narration and sound, synchronized pictures and sound
- ☐ Be readable; typographically well balanced

General criteria which might be applicable to the selection of various pieces of equipment to accompany the materials are:

- ☐ Physical characteristics
- ☐ Electrical characteristics
- ☐ Optical characteristics
- ☐ Audio characteristics
- ☐ Transport characteristics

9. The selection of instructional materials should reflect the goals of education for the local education agency, the current curriculum trends, methods of instruction, modes of learning, the availability of materials and equipment to meet the various levels of learning, and the individual student needs within a particular school community.
10. There should be an abundance of materials in all formats at many levels of difficulty, with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view – ethnic, religious, political, and cultural.
11. Reliable, unbiased professional selection aids, lists and reviewing sources should be used as guides. This system-wide list of selection sources should be made available upon request from the local school community.
12. A procedure should be established for the reconsideration of materials which have been questioned by an individual or group of individuals. The procedure should include the following areas: (1) the Process which clearly defines the steps to be followed; (2) a Reconsideration Form for Textbooks and Instructional Materials; and (3) the Appeal – a formal review of the textbook or instructional material questioned.
13. Appropriate personnel should reconsider the item being questioned according to the adopted procedure. If the complainant is not satisfied, further appeals should be directed to the person responsible as indicated in the procedure.
14. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education should serve as the final local authority when textbooks and instructional materials are being reconsidered.

TEXTBOOKS

DEFINITION — Any manual of instruction; a book dealing with a definite subject of study systematically arranged, intended for use at a specified level of instruction, and used as a principal source of study material for a given course.

Good, Carter V., Editor, *Dictionary of Education*, Third Edition. McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1973.

SELECTION — Maryland does not have a State policy for the selection of textbooks. Each local education agency is authorized to adopt textbooks as set forth in *The Public School Laws of Maryland, including the Code of Bylaws of the Maryland State Board of Education* — Article 77, Section 79:

> The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education shall, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, adopt procedures for the selection and purchase, at the lowest possible price consistent with good quality and subject to the provisions of this article, the necessary textbooks, . . . for use in the public schools in the State and they shall be furnished free of cost for use in the public schools of the State. It shall be the duty of the boards of education to furnish textbooks . . . in ample and sufficient quantities to the several grades in the public schools.

The Maryland State Department of Education believes that textbook selection should be at the local level; therefore, the responsibility lies solely with the local education agency.

In order to meet the need for better educational tools to achieve the goals expected of today's students, we encourage the utilization of multiple text materials as well as a variety of media.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DETERMINES TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS SELECTION; TEXTBOOKS ALONE SHOULD NOT DETERMINE THE CURRICULUM

Guidelines for Evaluating an

The method of selection of textbooks and materials involves formal evaluation and recommendation by administrators, teachers, subject-matter specialists, media specialists, students, and other qualified personnel within the school community. This process of examining and evaluating materials should be continuous and systematic.

GUIDELINES — Certain criteria should be considered when evaluating and selecting textbooks.

Textbook content should:

- Be accurate and objective
- Represent the broad spectrum of viewpoints of given topics
- Be correlated to visual materials
- Contain bibliographies reflecting multi-media materials
- Be appropriate to levels of learning
- Be authoritative, realistic, factual
- Be arranged chronologically and/or systematically
- Reflect the pluralistic character and culture of the American people
- Be free of sexual stereotyping
- Represent various ethnic groups

l Selecting Materials

MEDIA RESOURCES

DEFINITION — Printed and audiovisual forms of communication and their accompanying technology.

Maryland State Department of Education, *Criteria for Modern School Media Programs.*

SELECTION — The selection of media should reflect the goals of education for the local education agency, including current curriculum trends, methods of instruction, modes of learning, and the availability of materials and equipment to meet various levels of learning and individual student needs. All materials should be evaluated, to the extent possible, before purchase by the selection and evaluation committee. Reliable professional selection aids, lists, and reviewing media should be used as guides to assist the committee. Existing media collections should be examined continuously in order to update and replace items.

GUIDELINES — Certain criteria should be considered when evaluating and selecting media.

Curricula materials should:

- Be relevant to today's world
- Represent artistic, historic, and literary qualities
- Reflect problems, aspirations, attitudes, and ideals of a society
- Be pertinent to the curriculum
- Contribute to the objectives of the instructional program
- Be appropriate to the level of the user
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial subjects
- Provide a stimulus to creativity

Technical materials should:

- Be of acceptable technical quality; clear narration and sound, synchronized pictures and sound
- Be readable; typographically well balanced

General criteria which might be applicable to the selection of various pieces of equipment to accompany the materials are:

- Physical characteristics
- Electrical characteristics
- Optical characteristics
- Audio characteristics
- Transport characteristics

Policies and Procedures

Each local education agency should develop a statement of policy to govern the selection of materials and should have that policy adopted by its board of education. These policy statements should include the philosophy for selection, the staff or committee responsible for implementing the policy, the types of materials to be included, the criteria and procedures for their selection, and the procedures for handling materials when questioned. When such policy statements are cooperatively developed, accepted, and adhered to, they provide both guidance and protection for all who are involved in the selection and utilization of materials.

The most important objective in all evaluation procedures is to locate and make available the most suitable materials for use by students and teachers engaged in the teaching/learning process.

Materials include:

Books
Charts, Pictures, Posters
Films: 8mm, 16mm
Filmstrips: Silent, Sound
Games
Globes, Maps
Kits
Models
Microforms
Programmed Materials
Recordings: Disc, Tape
Slides
Transparencies
Video Tapes

WHERE TO GO . . .

Additional publications useful in the preparation of a policy statement concerning material selection are:

The School Library Bill of Rights for School Media Center Programs, endorsed by the American Association of School Librarians, 1969; *Policies and Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials*, approved by the Board of Directors of the American Association of School Librarians at the ALA Midwinter Conference, 1970 — currently under revision; *Aids to Media Selection for Students and Teachers*, Yvonne Carter and others, U.S. Office of Education, 1971; *Supplement, 1973, The Student's Right to Read*, prepared by The National Council of Teachers of English, 1972; *Intellectual Freedom and The Media Specialist*, prepared by the American Association of School Librarians, Intellectual Freedom Representation and Information Committee, Frances Dean, Compiler, June 1973; and *Guidelines for The Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials Which Will Insure Proper Recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities*, Maryland State Department of Education, 1973.

For additional information, contact the School Media Office Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education, P.O. Box 8717, BWI Airport, Baltimore, Maryland 21240.

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SAMPLE REQUEST FOR REC

Media consists of all types of print and nonprint materials; i.e., books, films (16mm and 8mm), filmstrips, tapes, records, study prints, pictures, transparencies, and all other printed or published items.

Type of media _____
Name of item _____
Publisher or Producer _____
Publication Date _____
Name of person, organization (group), or community seeking reconsideration
_____
Occupation _____
Address _____
Street City State Zip
Telephone _____

1. Did you read, view, or listen to the complete item? Yes____ No____
2. How was the item acquired? (Assignment, free selection, from a friend, etc.)
_____
3. Is the item part of a set or series? Yes____ No____
If yes, did you read, view, or listen to all of the set or series? Yes____ No____
4. What is objectionable regarding the item? Why? (Be specific) _____
_____
_____
5. How did you react to the objectionable part of the item? _____
_____
6. Were there good sections included in the item? Yes____ No____
If yes, please list them _____
_____

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CONSIDERATION OF MEDIA

7. Did you locate reviews of the items? Yes___ No___
   If yes, please cite them. _____
   _____
   _____
   If not, why not? _____
8. Did the review(s) substantiate your feelings? _____
9. Is there any educational merit to the item? Yes___ No___
   If yes, indicate such and provide approximate grade level(s). _____
   _____
10. How do you see the item being utilized in an educational program? _____
    _____
    _____
11. List the person(s) with whom you have discussed this item.
    Name Address Title-Occcupation
    _____
    _____
    _____
12. What were their reactions and/or opinions? _____
    _____
    _____
13. What do you suggest should be provided to replace the item in question?
    _____
    _____
14. What do you suggest should be done with the item in question? _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

Date Signature of Complainant